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The Colorado State Board expects new colleges to strive for regional accreditation as soon as possible. As the Board planned, in its initial year, to grant no approval or certification, college presidents needed some kind of interim status. This report outlines the criteria for approval by the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education. Consistent with regional standards, they include not only published material on the college's programs, philosophy, and objectives, but also evidence of (1) involvement of staff, students, faculty, and community; (2) commitment to the open-door policy; (3) on-going professional development of administration; (4) professional subject competence of teachers and in-service upgrading; (5) official encouragement of staff improvement; (6) a comprehensive curriculum including occupational, continuing, developmental, transfer, and community service programs; (7) suitable balance among the programs; (8) belief in and adequate staff for student services (counseling, financial aid, job placement, activities); (9) adequate physical facilities or firm plans to finance and build them; (10) sound fiscal management and ability to fund programs and pay attractive salaries; (11) respect for academic freedom and an open forum on controversial issues; (12) progress toward regional accreditation. Terms are defined and procedures for requesting interim approval are listed, including how to appeal a decision and request a review by the Board. (HH)

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A PROPOSAL FOR ESTABLISHING STATE APPROVAL STATUS FOR THE COLORADO COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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STATE BOARD FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
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CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
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INFORMATION

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A PROPOSAL FOR ESTABLISHING STATE APPROVAL STATUS FOR THE COLORADO COMMUNITY COLLEGES

I

RATIONALE

Approximately a year ago the office of the Division of Community Colleges stated its philosophy concerning the granting of State Board approval to institutions, both in and out of the state system. It was expressed at the time that institutions ought to expedite steps toward reaching regional accreditation as soon as feasible after their inception. (See attached memorandum.)

Since taking the position that the State Board would not, at least in its initial year, grant an approval or certification statement affecting Colorado community and junior colleges, a number of concerns have been expressed among the Colorado junior college presidents that some interim approval status is needed; hence, an approach to the granting of approval by the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education is herewith outlined.

II

CRITERIA FOR STATE APPROVAL BY THE STATE BOARD FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION

The assessing of an institution for approval by the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education presupposes that a set of criteria can be invoked. Establishing of criteria which the institutions are expected to meet calls for a judicious and carefully selected set of factors consistent

with good accrediting standards. The background for arriving at such criteria falls into several categories. Obviously the regional accrediting associations provide an excellent backdrop for state approval practices. While such practices should not duplicate regional practices, neither should they force the collection of an entirely different set of data. The National Commission on Accrediting provides sufficient guidelines for the structuring of state office practices when they enter into an approving role. This concern is stated as follows:

> "The National Commission can best assume a leadership role by the following kinds of action: (1) Commitment to the protection of the public interest as the primary consideration in accreditation. This represents a matter not easily defined, but one which is clearly present and the major reason for accrediting."

The criteria for provisional approval by the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education shall include:

(1) Evidence of consistent practices and operations of the college with the published materials and documents describing the college's programs, such as, the published catalog, statement of philosophy of the institution and the general aims and objectives expressed in the central documents of the college.

(2) Evidence of community, staff, faculty and student involvement in advising and determining the directions of the institution.

(3) Evidence that there is an operational commitment to the philosophy of the "open door" - including such specific criteria as (a) whether the college has an on-going commitment to the disadvantaged members of its community, and (b) evidence that the student body enrollment truly represents the cross-section of its community in respect to reflecting the socio-economic levels, racial and ethnic composition of its respective communities.

(4) Evidence that the administration is adequately trained and participates in on-going improvement of its professional standing through the participation in workshops, additional graduate work, conferences, institutes, etc.

(5) Evidence that the faculty have obtained professional competence in their respective teaching fields and that they are involved in on-going improvement of instruction through in-service programs, participation in workshops, institutes, conferences or additional graduate training.

(6) Evidence that all professional staff are encouraged and supported in removing deficiencies in their training or competence by the institution and the administration.

(7) Evidence of a fully comprehensive curriculum, including a full commitment to occupational education, continuing education, community service programs, developmental-type programs geared to repair academic deficiencies and an adequate transfer program.

(8) Evidence that particular program thrusts are not disproportionately emphasized to the exclusion of others listed in number (7) above.

(9) Evidence of a full commitment to student services programs with particular emphasis on individual counseling accompanied by adequate financial commitments to carry out a full and comprehensive student personnel program, including such activities as a sound financial aid program, job placement services, full range of student activities programs and a counseling ratio between the student and counselor adequate to carry out a sound advising program.

(10) Evidence of an adequate physical plant or evidence of commitment through capital construction programs of the state or through local financing

that physical facilities will be made available within a reasonable time.

(11) Evidence of a sound fiscal management and the capacity to finance the programs of the college, including such specific criteria as an adequate salary schedule to attract and retain competent personnel.

(12) Evidence of the institution's commitment in establishing and maintaining an open campus in respect to the accepted tenets of academic freedom, including such specific criteria as the maintaining the opportunity for an open forum with provisions for hearing both sides of a controversial issue.

(13) Evidence of progress toward and commitment to the seeking of regional accreditation.

III

DEFINITION OF TERMS

(1) Letter of Intent - An expression of an institution's intent and wish to be reviewed for initial approval by the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education.

(2) Initial Approval - The State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education shall grant initial approval for one year based on a review by the state staff of the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education.

(3) Full Approval for Certification - The State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education shall grant full approval lasting for three years. If an institution receives regional accreditation prior to the expiration of the three year period, State Board approval will automatically

extend until such time as regional accreditation is denied.

(4) Preliminary Review - Upon receipt of the Letter of Intent requesting review, the State Director shall set the time for a visitation to the campus by the State Board staff. The State Board staff may recommend granting initial approval for one year or denying said initial approval to the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education. Primary basis for recommending denial would be insufficient evidence that the institution is moving toward meeting the criteria established under the section entitled "Criteria for State Approval by the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education" of this document.

(5) Team Visitation Review - One year after initial approval has been granted, a seven member team consisting of the State Director, representatives of the junior colleges, and a representative of the four-year sector, shall conduct a team visitation, prepare a report of its findings and recommend granting or denying State Board approval for certification.

IV

PROCEDURES

(1) A Letter of Intent must be filed with the State Director indicating the institution's desire to be reviewed for initial approval by the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education.

(2) No later than thirty (30) days after receipt of the Letter of Intent the State Director shall respond to the institution, setting forth the time of the visit by the State Board staff.

(3) No later than thirty (30) days after the review by the State Board staff, the State Director shall recommend granting or denying initial

approval by the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education. The recommendation shall be accompanied by a list of recommendations to the institution incorporating areas of strengths and weaknesses and suggestions for correcting the weaknesses.

(4) At least one full year after initial approval has been granted the institution shall apply for review by a visiting team.

(5) Within thirty (30) days after receipt of the application for review for full approval status, the State Director shall appoint a team for review normally consisting of, but not necessarily limited to:

(a) One president;

(b) One administrative officer whose primary responsibility is supervision of instruction in the general studies;

(c) One administrative officer whose primary responsibility is supervision of instruction in the occupational studies;

(d) One administrator whose primary responsibilities are in the student personnel services area;

(e) One faculty member;

(f) The State Director or his designee;

(g) One member at large representing the four-year sector whose primary area of concern is the study of higher education and the junior college.

The members of the team will be appointed by the State Director. Services will be voluntary without remuneration except that the State Board shall pay costs of travel to and from the institution and per diem expenses.

The team member from the four-year sector shall serve as a member at large and will receive a standard consulting fee plus travel expenses and per diem for his services on the committee.

The State Director shall appoint the chairman of the visiting team.

(6) After review by the visiting team, the visiting team shall draft, no later than thirty (30) days after the visit, a recommendation to the State Director and the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education stating its decision as to whether full state approval shall be granted or denied, accompanied by supporting rationale for its decision.

(7) As an overall guideline affecting the several steps mentioned above, the reviewing bodies, whether the State Board staff in relation to granting or denying initial approval, or the visiting team in relation to granting or denying full state approval, shall assume the responsibility through the State Director, to inform the institution fully before the recommendation to the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education is made.

In addition, the institution has the right to appeal any staff decision made during the processes enumerated above and to seek appeal and review with the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education any decision or action rendered by the State Director, his assisting team or his staff.

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